

REMARKS

Summary

Claims 1-12 were pending. Claims 1 and 9 have been rewritten, Claims 13-31 have been added and Claim 2 cancelled. No new matter was added as a result of this amendment.

Rejection of Claims

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 4, 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda (U.S. Patent 6,362,810) in view of Durrani (U.S. Patent 6,011,542), Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Durrani in further view of Saito (U.S. Patent 4,777,600), Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Durrani in further view Okumura (U.S. Patent 5,966,719), Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Durrani in further view Wergen (U.S. Patent 6,580,414), and Claims 11-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Durrani in further view McAlindon (U.S. Patent 5,473,325).

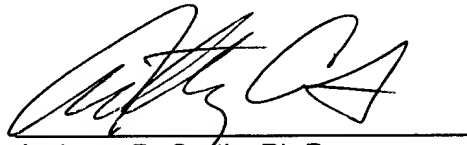
In the Office Action, Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants have rewritten Claim 9 to more clearly describe the invention toward which the claim is directed. Applicants submit that amended Claim 9 overcomes the rejection.

In the Office Action, Claims 2-3 and 9 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but the Examiner indicated they would be allowable if rewritten in an independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten Claim 1 to incorporate the elements of Claim 2 and cancelled Claim 2. Applicants have additionally added new Claims 13-31 in which independent Claim 13 incorporates the elements of Claims 1 and 3 and independent Claim 23 incorporates the elements of Claims 1 and 9. Applicants submit that pending Claims 1 and 3-31 are thus in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments above, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seek an early allowance thereof. If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application in the next Office Action and believes that a telephone interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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